

BREAKING GROUND

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**IN THIS
ISSUE:**

**BEST BUDDIES
JOBS
PROGRAM**

 **TENNESSEE COUNCIL**
on developmental disabilities



16

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A Note from the Executive Director

Dear Readers,

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. This issue of *Breaking Ground* magazine provides an opportunity to promote awareness that individuals with disabilities need more opportunities for **competitive integrated employment:** jobs in community settings at or above the minimum wage. We know that people with disabilities want to work and can work, with the right supports; however, unemployment rates for working-age individuals with disabilities continues to be far too high. Tennessee, and the Council in particular, is engaged in a number of initiatives and activities focused on increasing employment options that will result in more Tennesseans with disabilities working in good jobs in their communities.



2016 has been an exciting year for our state when it comes to employment for Tennesseans with disabilities. Tennessee submitted our first **Combined State Plan** for the implementation of the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which lays out strategies to align federally-funded services related to job training and education for all Tennesseans, including jobseekers with disabilities.

TennCare launched its new program, **Employment and Community First CHOICES**, on July 1, which provides a host of new employment services and supports to those enrolled in the program.

The Employment First Task Force, established by Governor Haslam's Executive Order No. 28, released its third annual report on employment for Tennesseans with disabilities and outcomes achieved through the collaborative work of the Task Force agencies. We provide a summary of the report in this issue, but encourage you to read the entire publication at www.tn.gov/cdd and share with others in your communities.

The Council serves as the lead agency for the state's **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Youth Transition**, convening the oversight committee that evaluates and updates the MOU. The MOU is an interagency agreement that defines the relationships, policies and procedures among state agencies to build collaboration and promote systemic change to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities transitioning from school to work.

The Council also facilitates monthly **Employment Roundtable** meetings that bring together a number of public and private agencies to discuss youth transition services, barriers to Tennesseans accessing services and current federal and state employment initiatives. The Roundtable discussions help to minimize the "silo" effect across state government agencies and facilitate opportunities for shared staff training.

Employment Roundtable participants include:

- Department of Children's Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Bureau of TennCare
- Vanderbilt Kennedy Center
- Disability Rights Tennessee
- Council on Developmental Disabilities

In 2015, the **TennesseeWorks Partnership** sponsored a social media campaign called "Hire My Strengths". The focus of the campaign was to celebrate the diverse strengths that people with disabilities bring to the workplace through photos and success stories. We will continue the "Hire My Strengths" campaign this October and invite you to visit www.tennesseeworks.org/hiremystrengths/ to learn how you can participate in the campaign by sharing your story.

Remember to stay connected to the Council and our work by following us on Facebook, signing up for our monthly e-newsletters and sharing *Breaking Ground* with others in your community!

Wanda Willis, Executive Director

When Brooke Abbott moved from Alabama to Nashville, Tennessee in the summer of 2015 to live with her father, she had never heard of Best Buddies. What Steve Abbott, Brooke's father, wanted most was somewhere for her to fit in. But securing employment in an integrated setting for individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability isn't typically accomplished by searching online or sending out a résumé. "I had experience working in food service, but was looking for an atmosphere of family and friends," said Brooke. "That's where Best Buddies came in. They recognized my true passions and promised to help me find a job that was fulfilling and fun."



by Brian
McNulty,
Employment
Consultant,
Best Buddies
Tennessee

Jobs Program

Photos by Tausha Ann Photography

Started in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, Best Buddies International is now active in every state and over 50 countries. The three pillars of the organization are one-to-one friendship, leadership development and integrated employment. The Tennessee roots of Best Buddies sprouted in 2010 when Anneliese Barron, a mother of a son with Down syndrome, transformed into fundraiser, advocate and eventually state director. Her efforts opened an official Best Buddies office in Brentwood, with a focus on matching students in special education at local schools in one-to-one friendships with classmates that shared similar interests, but did not have a disability.

Using various student, faculty and parent leaders at each chapter, Best Buddies is now represented at over 100 schools throughout the state, including an independent office in Memphis with 25 schools of its own.

What started as a mother concerned for her son's future has blossomed into lifelong friendships, frequent outings between buddies and the opportunity to break down another barrier that exists for individuals with disabilities: getting a job. According to the National Core Indicators as of 2015, 85% of individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability were unemployed. A



Daniel Mirtes checks CPAP machine functions

large portion of the employed 15% are working in areas where they weren't being challenged and saw their current job as unlikely to lead to promotions or future career opportunities.

In 2015, Nashville became the 12th city to open a Best Buddies Jobs program, focusing on integrated employment. The Best Buddies approach is simple: it's person-centered, individualized and completely driven by the participant. The staff members provide a support system to allow each person's aspirations to spearhead their job hunt and find not just any job, but one that can fulfill a need for professional and social development.

As of today, the Best Buddies Tennessee Jobs Program has 10 working participants in fields catered specifically to each worker.

Let Carolyn Meyer's story bring you into the mind of a working professional with a disability. Carolyn held her previous job for eight years, but in her own words knew she "needed a transition to help [her] continue to grow". Working in an office was her passion, but she soon realized the employment field is competitive and a bit overwhelming.



*Carolyn Meyer, Human Resources
Administrative Assistant, Asurion*

As a Best Buddies ambassador, she was familiar with the friendship and advocacy programs, so she decided to give the Jobs program a chance. "Best Buddies Jobs provided me with maturity and skills I needed to improve my self-esteem through interview practice, one-to-one job coaching and guiding me through training processes," said Carolyn.

Now an Administrative Assistant in Asurion's Human Resources Department, Carolyn cherishes her part-time schedule and relationships she has developed with her colleagues. Along the way, Carolyn has developed computer, e-mail and scanning skills while expanding her interpersonal and social abilities.

"I like that my difference doesn't stand out and that I am recognized as part of a team," she said.

Next up is Daniel Mirtes, a 24-year-old with a high school diploma, college certificate and thirst for a job that maximizes his potential. "I worked at a grocery store right after college for

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The **TIME Act** Aims to Undo Subminimum Wages

by April D. Meredith

The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 established a provision allowing employers of individuals with disabilities to pay said workers less than minimum wage after an employer applies for and is granted "a 14(C) certificate" from the Wages and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor. The original purpose was to transition workers with disabilities into real community jobs for competitive wages; however, in its nearly 80 years of practice, this rarely happens. In fact, according to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report*, 95% of all people hired under a 14(C) waiver never obtain the integrated, competitive job setting for which they strive.

The **TIME Act**

Because the minimum wage exemption actually does the opposite of its original intent, now comes a push for the Transitioning to Integrated and Meaningful Employment (TIME) Act which would, over a three-year period, effectively phase out subminimum wages in private, public and nonprofit entities sequentially. The TIME Act had bipartisan support in both chambers of Congress as of December 2015 and sponsorship in the House and Senate as HR 188 and SB 2001 respectively. Once passed, all employers of people with disabilities must pay their workers fair, competitive wages which may be accomplished through creative strategies such as employment first, supported or customized employment initiatives.

How do these alternative methods of employment work?

There are many people with disabilities who are already employed in competitive, integrated settings. According to the National Federal of the Blind website, at least one employment program that allows even those with the most significant disabilities to achieve competitive employment - earning at least the minimum wage - is already functioning in almost every state in the nation. These programs focus on

matching a worker's skills and abilities to a job, rather than simply placing a worker in a predetermined manufacturing position regardless of his or her ability to perform such labor.

For example, Joan used to work in a sheltered workshop where she was paid less than the minimum wage. Now she works at the Montgomery County Department of Liquor Control as a data entry assistant.** She works about 18 hours a week and performs jobs that she does well, such as data entry and preparing documents to be scanned. Joan is just one of many people who have found customized employment jobs through internships and the creativity of customized and supported employment specialists.

Other stories involve individuals who may not be able to read, write, speak or walk, but have the capability to perform meaningful work with proper accommodations. One such individual delivered the mail for a big organization by matching shapes and colors. If a red triangle represented Mr. Jones, a red triangle would appear on a box full of Mr. Jones's mail and his desk. The individual with a disability had to move the box from the mailroom to the office. In the process he saved the mailroom operators' time. This is but one of many examples of how individuals with even significant disabilities successfully contribute to the workplace in integrated, competitive jobs in their community.



April D. Meredith

Advocacy in Tennessee

In 2015, as both a member of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) State Legislative Committee and People First of TN (PFT), I established a collaboration between the two self-advocacy organizations based on our shared desire to eliminate the unjust practice of subminimum wages. To follow up our previous year's efforts of meeting with officials, and to further boost support, NFB of TN President James Brown, PFT Vice President Lorri Mabry, and myself gave a largely-attended joint presentation on the TIME Act at the 2016 Tennessee Disability MegaConference.

As we explained in our presentation titled *Real Work For Real Pay: Live the Life You Want*, since Congress created the

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TIME ACT ... Continued from page 5

minimum wage exemption, only Congress can responsibly repeal the 14(C) certificate provision. That's why we in the NFB and PFT are committed to educating the workers, employers and policy makers in our state about this vital issue. I encourage everyone to do their individual part by contacting their district's representative and let them know that we want real work for real pay for all.

We firmly believe that as our country transitions into community-based living, the passing of the TIME Act is the next critical step to ensure that all people with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity to pursue careers of their choice, be fully included in society, achieve true independence and live the life they want.

Visit <http://www.nfb.org/TIME>, or search for the hash tag #TIMEact on Twitter for more information and see other examples of advocacy on this issue.

*<http://www.gao.gov/assets/140/135187.pdf>

**http://www.hdi.uky.edu/setp/materials/vignette_v3_blue_508_FINAL.pdf

For additional stories, visit: <http://www.realworkstories.org/browse-all-stories> to learn more about those who have already successfully transitioned from jobs earning subminimum wages in segregated settings to jobs for competitive pay in the community.

April Meredith is a passionate self-advocate who utilizes her blindness to foster personal and professional relationships, build multi-entity collaborations, and encourage positive change at both the individual and systemic levels. She is a 2015 Partners in Policymaking Leadership Institute graduate, active member of three disability-related organizations, and happy wife and mother of three.

Best Buddies ... Continued from page 4

about two years as a stock clerk", said Daniel. "My job was fine, but I felt like my true abilities and skills weren't being utilized. I needed something that would pay me living wages and would not have me working until midnight every night."



Daniel Mirtes, C-PAP Repair Specialist, Verus Healthcare

Fast forward to July 2016 and Daniel is a full-time CPAP Repair Specialist at Verus Healthcare. "Thanks to the Best Buddies Jobs

program, not only do I feel very well suited in my office environment, but I am also able to fund my independent living," Daniel said.

Best Buddies Jobs active employer partnerships include a variety of places, based on the passions of Best Buddies Jobs participants. These include: Advance Financial, Franklin Marriott of Cool Springs, Verus Healthcare, Grand Ole Opry, Cousins Maine Lobster Food Truck, Home Depot and the Franklin Family YMCA.

Oh, and Brooke Abbott? She is now a Concessions Hostess at the Grand Ole Opry. As a small town Alabama girl, she had dreams and ambitions of being part of the Grand Ole Opry. "My job makes me feel more independent and I enjoy their family atmosphere," said Brooke. "The paycheck also makes me feel like I am earning my way into the Opry family."

Wherever Nashville takes you, keep an eye out for an expanding Best Buddies Jobs program.

Learn more about Best Buddies Tennessee's programs at www.bestbuddiestennessee.org

BG Arts 2016-17: Invitation to Submit

**Do you write short stories, creative essays or poetry?
Do you paint, sculpt, draw or take photographs?**

If so, we'd love to see your work for possible publication.

Breaking Ground magazine invites you to contribute to our Annual Arts Issue for 2016-17. We will consider fiction, creative essays and poetry up to 1,000 words, photos and all other forms of artwork.

Content is devoted to work by or about persons with disabilities.

We will give published contributors a prominent by-line, a biographical note and copies of the printed magazine. Please include your full name, complete contact information, and a one- to two-sentence bio with your submission.

Please limit submissions to three (3) per person. Submission deadline is October 31, 2016.

Send your submissions, electronically, to: Ned Andrew Solomon at ned.solomon@tn.gov

Questions? Please call 615.532.6556



The Occupational Diploma and Work-Based Learning

by Blake Shearer, EdS,
Coordinator of High School
Intervention and Transition,
Department of Education,
Division of Special Populations



Blake Shearer

What are a child's postsecondary goals for education, employment, independent living? These are questions that are relevant to all students and families as they approach the completion of high school, and they can evoke various levels of emotions, from fear to excitement. For students with disabilities, it is critical that the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team proactively develops a plan of activities that facilitates the movement towards postsecondary goals. The plan then makes the postsecondary goals realistic and attainable through supports, intervention and services.

The Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Populations, along with local education agencies, is working hard to improve postsecondary opportunities for students with disabilities. Through this partnership, the goal is to enhance the skills and expose students to the experiences that are early predictors for postsecondary success. Two of those options are the Occupational Diploma and participation in Work-Based Learning opportunities.

The Occupational Diploma

Tennessee now offers a new option, the Occupational Diploma, to students on an IEP who are not eligible for a General Education Diploma. Since the General Education Diploma is the first and preferred diploma option, the decision to pursue an Occupational Diploma cannot be made until a student has completed their 10th grade year, or is within two years of graduation.

While the Occupational Diploma is not the equivalent of a general education diploma, it is intended to have a stronger focus on vocational/career outcomes and may be useful for students with disabilities who pursue employment after exiting

high school. For students to be eligible for this option, they must complete their IEP; attend school regularly; and meet certain requirements of the SKEMA (Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment), including scoring high enough on a list of "required" and "critical" skills, and having had two years of work experience, paid or unpaid.

In 2015, a survey found that of 706 students with disabilities who exited high school in 2014, 568 graduated with a General Education Diploma. Of those, almost 79% were engaged in some type of postsecondary education, training and/or employment.

In contrast, 89 students graduated with a special education diploma and only 30% of those graduates were engaged in some type of postsecondary education, training and/or employment.

Through the SKEMA, students who graduate with an Occupational Diploma will be able to document mastery of critical job skills, both soft and technical, as well as two years of meaningful work experience. Documenting this for employers is expected to improve postsecondary outcomes and the possibility of success for Occupational Diploma graduates.

Taylor Graff is a recent graduate in Putnam County who received an Occupational Diploma. Her mother, Krista Brown, said that the "IEP [team] determined at the beginning of the 2015 school year to pursue the Occupational Diploma, and it was an incentive for Taylor to come back for her last year of high school."

Taylor now enjoys working multiple days a week with a competitive salary. Krista reports that the SKEMA requirements really prepared Taylor for employment after high school. "She has so much more confidence in what she is doing now. That is all because of the multiple work experiences. The experiences

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OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA ... Continued from page 7

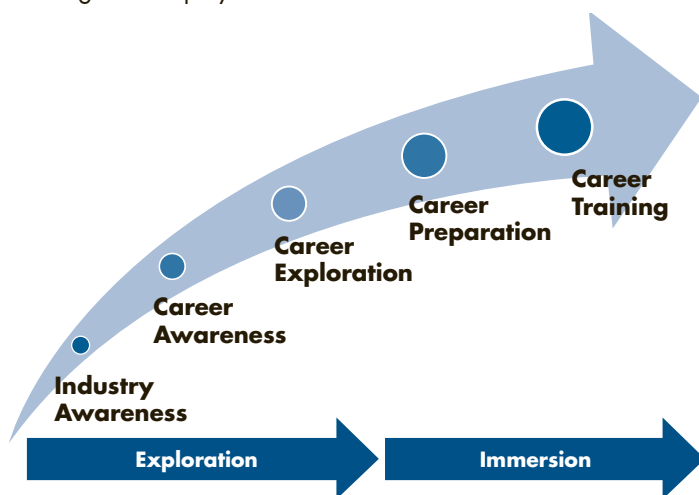
improved her face-to-face interactions with employers and the Occupational Diploma provided her with almost a 'portfolio' of what skills she could do and the work she had already completed."

Work-Based Learning and the Leadership Council

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is a hands-on approach to learning, applying and generalizing valuable job skills, soft skills and technical skills in preparation for postsecondary education and employment. This is accomplished through various experiences ranging from career exploration and awareness, internships, job-shadowing, school-based enterprises, community-based instruction and more.

According to guidance from the Tennessee Department of Education, "WBL is a proactive approach to bridging the gap between high school and high-demand, high-skill careers in Tennessee. It is progressive learning and exposure that begins in elementary schools and continues through postsecondary education and training."

That's exactly what we want to accomplish through rich WBL experiences: build a bridge to postsecondary education, training and employment.



While a student may have a disability, it does not change the fact that they want the same postsecondary opportunities and successes that students without disabilities desire. As Carter, Austin, and Trainer (2012) reported in their research and publication of Predictors of Postschool Employment Outcomes for Young Adults with Severe Disabilities, previous work experience is the most significant predictor for postsecondary work experience. That is to say, participating in paid or unpaid work experiences during the high school years leads to an increased likelihood a young adult with a disability will work after leaving school.

In a more anecdotal form from one WBL Coordinator Training, a Career and Technical educator said, "We are all working towards the same goal for our students! To prepare them for the career they desire after high school, regardless of the presence of a disability." That statement carried a tremendous amount of weight and embraces the Department's priority message that "All Means All".

To help accomplish this goal, the Department has developed the WBL Leadership Council. This body is comprised of certified WBL coordinators from each of the eight Centers of Regional Excellence (CORE) regions of the state. Each CORE region has at least two special educators and two career and technical educators. Their charge is to provide initial WBL Coordinator Certification Training as well as lead six in-depth professional learning communities (PLCs) in their CORE region within a school year.

Within the first year of the Council's development, 780 teachers were trained across the state; 205 of the people trained were special educators. So many people attended in the winter of 2016, that three additional training dates were added in East, Middle and West Tennessee to accommodate another 300 participants.

Work-Based Learning PLCs

While the teachers leave the WBL initial training informed and inspired, they leave the PLCs positively empowered. It has proved to be extremely beneficial for educators to gather with other districts and learn from fellow WBL coordinators and Council members. Through the PLCs, participants dive deeper into the following areas:

- Identifying local successes and barriers
- Assessing soft skills
- Reflection and documentation of soft skills
- Student readiness and expectations
- How to facilitate student learning
- Using the personalized learning plan to guide student learning
- Evaluation and continuous improvement of WBL programs
- Establishing and sustaining business partnerships

It is evident that we have to diligently focus on the outcomes for students with disabilities. In a traditional K-12 setting, a student is in school for about 16 % of their lives, but that 16 % is laying the foundation for the remaining 84% of their postsecondary life. Therefore, the services and practices put in place during school are the foundation for establishing postsecondary success.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:

by Briana Moore, WIOA Youth Program Manager, Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Focus on Youth Services



Briana Moore

Photo by AP
Photography &
Design

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law. This federal legislation is designed to help job seekers, including those with disabilities,

access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

WIOA Youth Services are available to eligible youth ages 14-24 that face barriers to employment. One particular group that these services focus on is youth with disabilities. As a target population under WIOA, additional funds and resources will be allocated towards serving individuals with disabilities. WIOA Youth Services aim to prepare youth for employment and/or postsecondary education through strong linkages between academic and occupational learning. Local communities and partner programs provide youth activities and services in partnership with the Tennessee American Job Centers (AJCs) and under the direction of local workforce development boards.

Reviewing the accessibility of Job Centers and their programs, supporting staff to appropriately serve jobseekers with disabilities and keeping up with technology advancements have always been a focus of our services, and are an integral part of the AJCs' work. This will continue to be true under WIOA.

Through additional cross training of all AJCs, the staff will be increasingly knowledgeable of partner programs (Vocational Rehabilitation, especially) that have resources focused on assisting individuals with disabilities. In addition, assessments

by AJC staff can better identify the need for additional support or referral of services for an individual with disabilities to another program.

Who is eligible for WIOA Youth Services?

To be eligible for WIOA Youth Services, an individual must meet specific guidelines related to income status, age, and school status that result in a barrier to employment. WIOA Youth Program participation is assessed by specific standards and determined for interested individuals in one of the two following categories and requirements:

1. In-School Youth
2. Out-of-School Youth

An In-School-Youth must be attending school, not younger than 14 or older than 21, qualify as low income, and qualify as one or more of the following:

- "Deficient" in basic skills
- An English language learner
- A youth involved in the criminal justice process
- A youth who is homeless or a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system
- Pregnant or parenting
- An individual with a disability
- An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

An Out-of-School Youth is an individual who is not attending any school (as defined under State law), not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment, and qualifies as one or more of the following:

- A student who has dropped out of school
- A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least

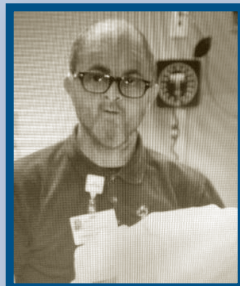
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Jarius Parker

**TN School
for the Deaf/
Post-Secondary
Transition Program**

Jarius Parker has a Diploma in Administrative Assistant/Customer Service from the Tennessee Center of Applied Technology. He works at Cardinal Health in the medical supply warehouse.



Marty Myers

**Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH**

Marty Myers works on the fourth floor of the Heart Hospital at the University of Tennessee Medical Center as an Environmental Services Assistant. He is responsible for stocking the nurse servers and providing clean linens.



Tiffany Paul

**TN School
for the Deaf/
Post-Secondary
Transition Program**

Tiffany Paul works at RockTenn assembling cardboard product displays for retail stores. She also volunteers at the TN Valley Humane Society caring for animals.



Holly Johnson

**Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH**

Holly works diligently at UTMC every day stocking the nurse servers and cleaning the nurses' station.



Victoria Turnage

**TN School
for the Deaf/
Post-Secondary
Transition Program**

Victoria Turnage works at RockTenn where she assembles cardboard product displays. She also volunteers at East TN Children's Hospital in the gift shop where she restocks and organizes the shelves.

A Celebration of Jobs

Breaking Ground knows that there are several organizations and agencies in our state that are having success finding meaningful employment opportunities for jobseekers with disabilities. In this issue we chose to focus on two entities in East Tennessee that are seeing some very impressive results from their efforts.

Project SEARCH at the University of Tennessee Medical Center is a licensed replication of a nationally recognized program developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital to provide adults with developmental disabilities with education and experiences to learn skills needed for successful employment. Adults accepted into Project SEARCH participate in nine-month internships, five days per week, at University of Tennessee Medical

Center (UTMC). Interns complete three 10-week "rotations" to learn different jobs at the hospital. Upon graduation from their internship, participants are provided with individualized supports for placement into employment at either UTMC or a collaborating local employer.

Project SEARCH at UTMC is operated through a partnership with Breakthrough Corporation, a provider agency. Supports to the program are provided by the Knoxville Area Employment Consortium and an Employment Advisory Council comprised of Knoxville's leading employers. Funding for Project SEARCH Internships, job placement and job retention are provided by the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and/or the Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation

Tiffani McKinney

**Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH**

Tiffani McKinney is employed on the ninth floor of the east tower at the University of

Tennessee Medical Center. Her responsibilities include maintaining infection control, stocking patient rooms with linen and nursing supplies, maintaining the isolation carts and doing some clerical work.



Conner Mitchell

**TN School
for the Deaf/
Post-Secondary
Transition Program**

Conner Mitchell works full time in the Tennessee School for the Deaf dining hall. He preps meals, washes dishes, cleans the dining hall and serves food to students and staff.

Seth Krichinski

**Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH**

Seth Krichinski works in the Environmental Services Department at UTMC. He is responsible for stocking all the supply closets throughout the hospital as well as for recycling.





Steve Ogle
Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH

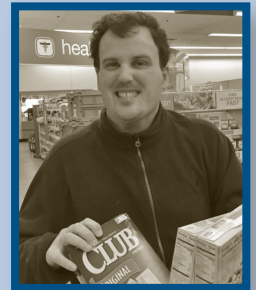
Steve Ogle is employed at Staybridge Suites in Knoxville as a Houseman.



Charity Bailey

TN School for the Deaf/Post-Secondary Transition Program

Charity Bailey volunteers at First Steps II Day Care. She takes care of infants by changing diapers, feeding, rocking and simply interacting with the babies.



John Ritchie

**Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH**

John Ritchie works at Walgreen's stocking shelves.

s Well Done

Services. (Note: this Project SEARCH site serves adults with disabilities, which is a slightly different model than most sites - including the one in Jackson mentioned in another article in this issue - that place high school students with disabilities in internships during their final year of school, and some funding and staff support is provided through the local education agency.)

Tennessee School for the Deaf's

recently retired superintendent, Alan Mealka, had a vision that all TSD graduates would be placed in either college/tech school or a job upon graduation. To aid in that ambitious effort, a post-secondary transition program was established and has been going strong for seven years. The goal is to have all of the



program students out in the community attending college, technical school, volunteering - with the goal of gaining employment skills, plus giving back to the community - or working at a competitive job placement.

The following are some of these two programs' success stories.



Shannan Savage

**TN School for the Deaf/
Post-Secondary Transition Program**

Shannan Savage attends Pellissippi State Community College full-time and is majoring in Graphic Design. She works at Wal-Mart part time in the clothing department.



Vickie Parks

**Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH**

Vickie Parks works at the Knoxville Zoo as a gift shop greeter.



Jamal Shaw

**TN School for the Deaf/
Post-Secondary Transition Program**

Jamal Shaw works at JC Penney in the sign department. He prepares various departments for sales by checking pricing, placing and creating signs.



Chad Smith

**Breakthrough/
Project SEARCH**

Chad Smith is a Server Assistant at a deli called Sam and Andy's. Chad's tasks include stacking and cleaning cups, bussing tables and refilling the ice machine.



Ashley Hindsley

**TN School for the Deaf/
Post-Secondary Transition Program**

Ashley Hindsley works at Menchie's Frozen Yogurt. She uses the cash register, serves customers and maintains the yogurt machines and toppings bar.

Workforce ... Continued from page 9

the most recent complete school year calendar quarter. (School year calendar quarter is based on how a local school district defines its school year quarters.)

- A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is an individual with low income and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner
- An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
- An individual who is homeless, a runaway, an individual who is in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act, or an individual who is in an out-of-home placement
- An individual who is pregnant or parenting
- An individual with a disability
- An individual with low-income who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

Appropriate documentation and verification is required for each eligibility requirement. The local workforce development areas as well as other approved youth providers or partner programs administer youth services across the state.

Partnerships matter

Partnership is vital to WIOA's success in Tennessee and, as a result, several state departments are involved in its implementation. The partners are: Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development – Division of Workforce Services, Division of Employment Security and Division of Adult Education; the Tennessee Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Family Assistance and Child Support; the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD); the Tennessee Department of Education; and the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services are a key element under WIOA in respect to improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities, aligning the efforts of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the Department of Education to support and strengthen transition programs. Overseen by the Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services, Pre-Employment Transition Services enables Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to become engaged in a

student's life starting as early as age 14 to help the student prepare for employment.

Through this model, there is flexibility for VR to combine efforts with the local education agency (LEA) to customize transition planning services. These discussions include providing services and supports that will lead to employment and education outcomes as the student exits high school. To further inform those decisions, students may opt to participate in five services available through Pre-Employment Transition Services:

- Job Exploration and Counseling
- Work-Based Learning Experiences
- Counseling in Post-Secondary Opportunities
- Workplace Readiness Training
- Training on Self-Advocacy

The services are coordinated in partnership with the local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, a child's teacher, parent or guardian, and/or other school professionals who may already be involved in support or service provision. It's important to note that students may participate in one or several of these services, depending on their interests and future goals.

Starting in 2015, VR implemented a Pilot Program for Pre-Employment Transition Services in the Jackson-Madison County School System (JMCSS). One major aspect of the pilot program was the development of a local collaboration, (based on the model of the state-level Employment Roundtable), which includes representatives from the departments of Human Services, Education, Labor and Workforce Development, Mental Health and Substance Abuses Services, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Economic Development, Housing Development, Transportation and JMCSS. The local group meets monthly to discuss local program coordination and case solutions.

Through these collaborative conversations, people have not only deepened their understanding of the services and supports offered by various agencies, they've been able to meet face-to-face to coordinate and clear the path to employment for transitioning youth with disabilities. Furthermore, through a partnership with local staff at TNECD, VR counselors have also been able to participate in meetings with local employers and create a single point of contact to coordinate meaningful workplace opportunities for students. This has proven to be a very successful model for on-the-ground implementation of the Youth Transition Memorandum of Understanding, an interagency agreement that defines the relationships, policies and procedures among state agencies to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities transitioning from school to work.

by Diana Fedenic, PR Manager, Shelby Residential and Vocational Services

Lorene's Story

Photos by Peri Gildersleeve



The closing of SRVS Industries on June 26, 2015 signaled a new era in hiring people with disabilities. For more than 52 years, the occupational workshop

and founding program of SRVS employed people with disabilities in a warehouse environment where they worked on assembly lines earning wages based on production through contract work. Although SRVS also had a community-based employment program, the closing represented a monumental shift toward person-centered practices in meaningfully including people with disabilities in the workforce. The old model of a segregated workshop paved the way for a future of full community integration.

In 2013 SRVS was tapped to participate in the U.S. Department of Labor initiative called the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program, an initiative led in Tennessee by the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Through this effort, staff developed soft skills training modules, established a career center, collaborated with national subject matter experts and organized volunteer opportunities which allowed employees being served to try out a variety of job sites. As of January 2016, about 150 people with disabilities, including 38 who transitioned from the workshop setting, were employed through SRVS Community Employment Services (CES). SRVS has partnered with about 60 employers to make these community placements a reality.

Lorene is one of the individuals from the workshop who graduated from the career center to find meaningful and gainful employment in the community. An employee in the workshop for 26 years, Lorene was one of the first to go through a "discovery" process to test several work environments. Discovery allows the person supported and accompanying staff to gauge a candidate's job interests.

From there, SRVS staff created a profile on Lorene which listed the types of supports she would need to be successful in a job, accommodations that would benefit both her and the employer. Lorene's profile revealed that she likes to be indoors, enjoys

cleaning and requires a predictable routine of tasks. Nikita Moody, Lorene's case manager, knew about Lorene's work ethic at the workshop, and was aware of her friendly, outgoing personality.

Moody reported that Lorene consistently excelled at her jobs in the workshop and was eager to work in the community.

Once the profile was complete, staff worked to find a job opportunity that matched Lorene's strengths, interests and aptitude. That preparatory work appears to have paid off. Robert Taylor, President of Taylor and Taylor Unlimited, and his wife and business partner Linda, who is a franchise owner of Jani-King, hired Lorene to clean one of their company's offices. "I like my work better than in the workshop," said Lorene of her new job at Jani-King, a national cleaning services company in existence since 1968. "I mop and clean the file room and kitchen and everything! And when I get a paycheck I like to go out and eat."

As the mother of a child with a disability, Linda felt a pull on her heart strings to hire Lorene. She also knew she needed a reliable employee, since providing superior customer satisfaction is their company's trademark. Thankfully, Lorene has met and exceeded those expectations.

At the office where Lorene works part-time, she dusts, mops floors, stocks and cleans the restrooms and kitchen, vacuums the carpet, takes out the trash, wipes down windows and counter tops, washes out the coffee pots, and completes several other tasks. "Lorene is very dependable and gets the job done in a timely and efficient manner," said Linda. "She is not demanding nor does she complain; she is just happy to work. I can't ask for a better employee!"

Linda appreciates the CES program for its thorough efforts to find the right person for the right job, and for providing a job coach to support Lorene in doing the best job she can do. Latisha Scott is Lorene's job coach, and was a line supervisor for Lorene at SRVS Industries

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EMPLOYMENT FIRST TASK FORCE:

by Emma Shouse, Director of Communications,
TN Council on Developmental Disabilities,
and Cara Kumari, Director of
Communications, Department of
Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

3rd Annual Report to the Governor



In 2013, Governor Haslam signed Executive Order No. 28, which established the Employment First Task Force in the state of Tennessee. The task force was charged with identifying and eliminating barriers to employment for people with disabilities, mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders. This group includes a number of public and private agencies, as well as individuals with disabilities and family members, and develops strategies to implement best practices, partnerships and opportunities to increase integrated competitive employment for Tennesseans with disabilities.

For the past three years, the Task Force has met quarterly to work towards goals set forth in the Executive Order. In Year 1, the group focused on identifying barriers to employment by engaging families through community conversations and surveys across the state, as well as examining state programs and policies to find ways to expand employment opportunities. In the second year, members created a strategic plan and goals to address the barriers they identified. With goals outlined, the Employment First Task Force spent Year 3 collaborating to begin completing their objectives to improve employment outcomes for Tennesseans with disabilities.

The 3rd annual Employment First Task Force report to the Governor outlines progress made towards the goals listed below:

- **Alignment and Coordination of Service Systems:** Align service delivery systems and strengthen coordination to increase employment opportunities for Tennesseans with disabilities

- **Community Commitment:** Build shared community commitment to Employment First for individuals with disabilities
- **More Employers Hiring:** Increase the number of businesses and employers throughout the state who actively seek and hire individuals with disabilities
- **Tennessee as a Model Public Sector Employer:** Make Tennessee a model public sector employer through actions to employ more people with disabilities and through policy and regulatory change
- **Student Transition to Employment:** Prepare students for employment throughout their education and connect them to essential services

Many accomplishments can be directly tied to the strong collaborative efforts among state agencies and partner groups. This includes the execution of the Memorandum of Understanding for Youth Transition from School to Work (which is an interagency agreement, overseen by the Council), the submission of the Tennessee Combined State Plan to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the development and launch of the Employment and Community First CHOICES program and the establishment of the first Pre-Employment Transition Services pilot site through Vocational

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Lorene's Story ... Continued from page 13

for more than four years. Her presence ensures a sense of continuity in Lorene's life as she has transitioned into community employment.

According to her boss, Lorene's eyes light up when she gets her paycheck for a job well done.

CES was recently recognized with the "Best Practices" award by the Association of People Supporting Employment

First (APSE). In addition, AutoZone, one of SRVS' partnering employers, received the "Employer Award" in the medium-sized business category for embracing the concept of inclusion in hiring people with disabilities. Starting with two SRVS employees who became company role models, the company now employs eight former workshop participants. CES also garnered the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) Madeline Will Employment First Excellence Award for innovative employment practices.

Task Force ... Continued from page 14

Rehabilitation. Task Force member agencies share information about their initiatives that are taking innovative approaches to improving employment rates among Tennesseans with disabilities, like educating employers, training educators, transforming traditional employment services, and coordinating supports for students transitioning from high school to work. (You can read about a number of these activities in this issue of *Breaking Ground*.)

The report also shares stories of Tennesseans with disabilities who are working successfully in their communities in a variety of types of jobs. While much progress has been made through the strategic coordination and collaboration made possible through Executive Order 28, there are still barriers that must be addressed to truly move the needle of employment outcomes for people with disabilities in our state. The Employment First Task Force is currently developing the next phase of their strategic plan to continue this important work to ensure that the thousands of Tennesseans with



disabilities, mental illness and substance abuse disorders who want to work have the opportunities to find competitive-wage jobs of their choosing in their communities.

Read the *Employment First Task Force Report to the Governor* at www.tn.gov/cdd.

A Unique and Strong Partnership Dedicated to Meaningful Employment

by Stephanie Brewer Cook, ADA Coordinator for City of Knoxville and KAEC Chair

Formed more than 20 years ago, KAEC is the Knoxville Area Employment Consortium. The Consortium is a collective of disability and government agencies, plus private industry professionals, dedicated to the meaningful employment of people with disabilities. KAEC participates in a number of employment programs such as Project SEARCH and the Walgreens REDI (Retail Employees with Disabilities Initiative) Program, aimed at on-the-job training of people with disabilities that often results in employment.

The Knoxville Mayor's Council on Disability Issues (CODI) is an advisory council to the City of Knoxville on disability-related programs and policies. Created in 1984, this 21-member council provides information to the City on current events or concerns within the disability community.

At an August 2015 "Community Conversation", Knoxville Mayor Rogero told the standing-room-only audience that

the "time is now" to focus our efforts on the employment of people with disabilities. As a result, CODI created an Employment subcommittee which reached out to KAEC to form a partnership in order to respond to the Mayor's request.

Since February, the CODI/KAEC committee has produced five educational video clips about people with disabilities and the employment issues of importance to them. There are at least five more tapings planned for this year, and all the videos will be posted online at the new website, www.kaectn.org, beginning in September.

Finally, the CODI/KAEC committee has created a "sticker design" contest for the community to submit original artwork for window stickers that will be awarded to local businesses that are committed to the employment of people with disabilities. Stickers will be distributed in October, which will fortunately coincide with National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

TennesseeWorks Partnership Transforming Employment Landscape for People with Disabilities



by Lynnette Henderson, Associate Director of Adult Community Services, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and Rachael Jenkins, Dissemination Coordinator for TennesseeWorks

In 2011, the TennesseeWorks partnership was formed with the goal of strengthening state policies and systems to promote the employment of people with disabilities. Since then, agencies and organizations in the partnership have collaborated on numerous initiatives aimed at transforming the employment landscape for Tennesseans with disabilities. These initiatives target a wide variety of audiences including employers, educators, self-advocates, families and disability professionals. TennesseeWorks uses in-person training along with a website, email newsletter and social media to increase reach and impact statewide.

Employer engagement has been a key priority of the partnership since its inception. People with disabilities bring diversity and innovation to the workplace. Creating an inclusive workplace culture benefits employers and contributes to the overall success of businesses. The Employer Outreach Initiative (EOI) spearheaded by TennesseeWorks focuses on sharing with employers why hiring people with disabilities makes good business sense and provides examples of companies that have benefited from hiring people with disabilities.

Currently, there are 27 active "presenters" of the 44 individuals that have been trained statewide to promote the "business case" for hiring employees with disabilities to employers and civic organizations. As of July 2016, these trainers have delivered their message to over 1,472 people in 50 Tennessee counties. Our partner, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, has in place Workforce Employer Outreach Committees (WEOC) to create a direct link between the Department of Labor and Tennessee employers. Many EOI presentations have been given at WEOC meetings, as these groups are places where employers gather and are seeking information.

At these meetings, local businesses have an opportunity to hear the business case for hiring people with disabilities, and to meet local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) counselors, Career Center staff, Community Rehabilitation providers and school system personnel with whom they can work to hire these job-seekers. This allows employers who are interested to be immediately connected with someone who can follow up.

Recently, we've begun collecting evaluation data on these EOI presentations. Employers answer overwhelmingly that they are satisfied with the training, that the presentation increased their knowledge or skills, and many reported they are "likely", "quite likely" or "extremely likely" to hire an employee with a disability, if they haven't already. It seems clear from our data that this initiative is accomplishing what we set out to do: to plant the seeds of change in employers' attitudes and in allowing collaborations to begin.

Debbie Mullins of the Department of Labor and Workforce

Development has been a key partner in the Southern Middle Tennessee region. During the course of our EOI outreach, we have received a commitment from Ann Thompson, Director, Workforce Development at the Department of Economic and Community Development, to work with Cherrell Campbell-Street, Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services, to include VR in all of her Workforce 360 meetings. These meetings are held to rally around a particular business when it has a hiring need and brings members from many government departments



Hire My Strengths social media campaign celebrates strengths self-advocates bring to the workplace

Photo Credit: Kyle Jonas

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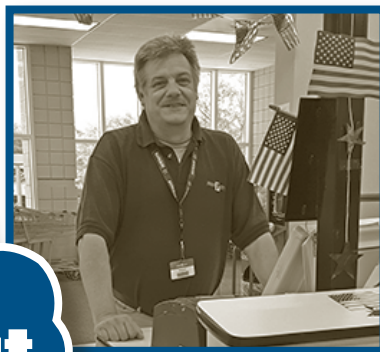
Toward a New Way of Thinking About Employment

by Cristi Blalock, IPS Team
Leader, Frontier Health

In 2013, Governor Haslam signed Executive Order No. 28, which established the Employment First Task Force in the state of Tennessee. The task force was charged with identifying best practices for, and eliminating barriers to, employment for people with disabilities, including mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders.

The Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Program is a national, evidence-based model of supported employment that has been successful in helping persons with behavioral health disorders obtain competitive, integrated employment. In Tennessee, nine different pilot sites at community mental health agencies use the IPS model to help individuals find and maintain jobs, through a partnership between the TN Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders and the TN Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation Services (Vocational Rehabilitation). To learn more about the IPS model of supported employment, visit www.dartmouthips.org.

When you think about being employed, a lot of initial thoughts come to mind, from earning a paycheck to building a career



Howard is working at the Self-Checkouts, monitoring screens and troubleshooting orders as needed.

Photos by Cristi Blalock
and Emily Sullins

path. For someone who experiences a severe and persistent mental illness, those thoughts can be very different. It may feel impossible to hold down a job, or their support system may not view employment as a realistic possibility.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is a research-based employment services model that introduces a new way of thinking: competitive community employment is viewed as an integral part of someone's recovery process.

When referred to our IPS Employment Services program by his case manager, Howard struggled with mental health issues. He wanted to have a job to be like everyone else and to be around other people.

Howard's case manager began talking to him about work and how it could change his routine and allow him to be around others. Howard agreed to a referral for IPS employment

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TennesseeWorks ... Continued from page 16

together to work on meeting that business' goal.

Another central focus of TennesseeWorks is to equip educators working in the area of transition from school to work with the knowledge, skills and commitment to implement high-quality practices to help prepare students for life after high school. With that goal in mind, the TennesseeWorks staff and the Department of Education are partnering to design a comprehensive transition framework for educators in Tennessee, accompanied by online and on-demand courses to demonstrate how to implement the best practices covered in the manual.

Social media is key to TennesseeWorks' outreach efforts. During National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in 2015, TennesseeWorks launched the "Hire

My Strengths" social media campaign. The focus of the campaign was to celebrate the diverse strengths people with disabilities bring to the workplace through pictures. Plans are underway to continue the campaign during NDEAM in 2016.

For more information on the Employer Outreach Initiative, visit <http://www.tennesseeworks.org/employer-outreach-initiative/>, which includes a map tracking progress of the Employer Outreach Initiative, along with numerous resources for employers interested in hiring individuals with disabilities.

To get involved with the campaign, visit <http://www.tennesseeworks.org/hiremystrengths/>. Stay up to date with our activities by subscribing to our newsletter at www.tennesseeworks.org/subscribe.

Project SEARCH

Comes to Jackson, Tennessee

by Melissa Whitaker, Project
SEARCH Instructor, JMCSS/JMCGH

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program and Adult Learning Programs are unique, business-led programs that take place entirely at a workplace. Total workplace immersion for one year ensures a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and relevant job skills training through strategically-designed internships for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Project SEARCH program in Jackson, Tennessee is located at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital (JMCGH). Started in August 2015, it involved 12 interns and seven internship departments, though three additional internship departments were quickly added. The program completed its first year - adhering to the Jackson-Madison County School System calendar - with four interns hired by JMCGH.

"The hospital has been a proud host for Project SEARCH in Jackson," said Katie Chandler, Director of Guest Resources for the Hospital and the Project SEARCH liaison. "As the largest employer in Madison County, we are able to offer a variety of work experiences for the skill development of the interns. Our departmental leadership has embraced the individual interns to assist in both their personal and professional development."

Likewise, Project SEARCH has been grateful for JMCGH department directors and hospital employees for welcoming Project SEARCH interns into their areas, and for allowing them to be a part of their team.

Beth VanWyk, Director of Patient Transport, and Adam Crews, Assistant Director of Patient Transport, saw lots of potential in

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services. He had some major barriers that had prevented him from working previously, including frequent hospitalizations due to his mental illness, very little work history and no access to transportation. These factors would have made it hard for Howard to find employment on his own, but the evidence-based practice of the IPS model gave him a better shot at being successful.

With the help of an employment specialist, Howard was led through some career exploration. A tool called a Career Profile was used to document various areas of interest, barriers and past work history. The purpose of the Profile is to narrow down career goals by not just thinking about job duties, but also taking a job site's atmosphere, location and natural supports – those supports that can be provided by peers on site instead of support staff - into consideration.

The employment specialist quickly began making contacts in the community. The first job Howard tried was a position at a local retail store in a temp-to-hire product stocking position. This job didn't work out, due to an early clock-in time and lack of transportation. Unfortunately Howard was let go after the holidays.

Undeterred, Howard and his employment specialist immediately began searching for another job in his area of



Howard's Employment Specialist, Cristi Blalock, spends time with Howard while he performs his job duties.

interest. They found a local grocery store that was willing to accommodate certain hours so Howard could ride the bus to and from work most days. This alleviated the burden on his family of having to find a way to get him to work.

Howard has excelled in this position. He started out working as a courtesy clerk, with the primary job duties of bagging groceries, helping customers and getting shopping carts from the parking lot. He did such a great job that, when he expressed interest in the produce department, they let him have a shift there once or twice a week. However, Howard decided that he didn't like that as much as he thought he would, so the employer stopped scheduling him back there.

Communication has been the key. Howard has benefitted from the integrated care IPS provides because his employment specialist is able to connect with his case manager and healthcare providers if Howard has an issue at work. He's been working for 15 months now with no hospitalizations. During that time he has made friends with co-workers who join him for dinner out regularly. Being successfully employed has given Howard a life that he hadn't imagined before working with the IPS employment program.

Project SEARCH ... Continued from page 18

Kevin Gantt early during his first internship, and requested for him to continue in their department throughout the year.

Kevin's job was created due to a need. Patients and guests use wheelchairs throughout the hospital, and the chairs are typically left at the user's destination. In response, an "Equipment Rounding" job description was developed. Now Kevin begins his day making rounds searching for wheelchairs and returning them to a central location. The turnaround time for transporting patients has improved greatly, because wheelchairs are now readily available.



Beth VanWyk, Kevin Gantt and Adam Crews

Recognizing a good thing, Beth and Adam added more job responsibilities for Kevin, such as retrieving oxygen tanks left on beds, conducting wheelchair maintenance and assembling new wheelchairs. "I was immediately excited when I heard about the program [Project SEARCH] and the opportunity for the community to open doors for the skill development of the Project SEARCH interns," said Beth. "It's been a blessing to know Kevin. He's humble when taking directions and follows through. We created this job for him, and he's honestly been the best one for it. He's been so beneficial to our department. He's one of us now."

Charlotte Merriweather's second internship was in Central Supply where she learned to pull orders from an order sheet. This is a very important job because all the hospital supplies are delivered to the Central Supply distribution department before being sorted and pulled for department deliveries. In addition, items such as Angiocath Safety Plugs, Adapter Clave and Personal Belonging Bags are also pre-bundled here for delivery. When asked about her internship, Charlotte stated, "I like it there because it's fun, and I like my co-workers. My favorite part of the job is pulling orders."



Charlotte Merriweather

For her third internship, Charlotte began working on a nursing floor with a Patient Care Tech (PCT) as a PCT assistant. Charlotte has a wonderful personality and loves to talk. With her gentle spirit, she puts her patients at ease as she performs her job duties, which include giving patients baths, changing beds, helping feed patients, answering patient call lights, assisting with patient mobility and completing patient vital signs and charts. Charlotte would like to have a career as a Patient Care Tech and is currently receiving additional Ready-to-Work Personal Care Attendant Training from the Star Center in Jackson to help her meet this employment goal.

"[Charlotte] completes every aspect of the PCT job description except bedside glucose testing," said Donmeka Martin-Mercer, RN, MSN, MHA, Director, A6 Nursing Floor. "She does all the ADLs (Activities of Daily Living) and completes Intake and Output. We love Charlotte, and she is a great asset to our team."

Another Project SEARCH participant, Passion Barnett, spent her first two of three internships as a transporter in the Patient Transport Department. After working with a mentor, Passion was released to work autonomously as a transporter for patient discharge. She was given a pager to let her know when there was a job for her, and she learned the phone log system and the process for manually recording necessary information before getting the patient. She quickly figured out how to navigate the hospital, so she could pick up patients, take them to discharge and help them get into their cars.



Passion Barnett

Passion was the last hospital employee patients would interact with before heading home. Therefore, it was very important to Passion that she make a good impression by leaving her charges with kind words and a smile. Passion is currently working in her third internship in Central Supply. This was a good transition since she was already very familiar with the hospital, but for Passion, all changes are typically challenging. "I have been doing some stocking and putting things away in central stores," Passion said. "I have also been delivering medical supplies to the floors. I really enjoy working with them and I learn really quick. I was shy, but now I'm not; I am glad to change. I need to learn different things in life."

If you are interested in speaking with someone about launching a Project SEARCH site in your local community, contact Gayle Feltner at susan.feltner@tn.gov or 615.313.5318.

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